

# CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE

## Requirements, Expectations & Responses for Skill Sets

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**Abstract** -- Developing a curriculum is a never ending process in the sense that it should be flexible to a certain extent so as to be open for accepting the latest changes. Obviously, any curriculum should be comprised of two parts; the rigid and the flexible. The rigid part comprises of the basic principles which are not going to be changed over time. The flexible part should comprise of contemporary developments in the field which may be revised every year or every two years.

**Keywords** -- Curriculum Design, Evaluation, Change in Curriculum

### I. INTRODUCTION

Curriculum of a discipline is a step by step annotation of the points that a learner is intended to grasp in order to master the requisites of the subject in contention. This is also the guide for the faculty member who needs to take care of the boundaries.

Curriculum Development Exercise chiefly consists of the following activities:

1. Design
2. Development
3. Implementation
4. Monitoring
5. Evaluation
6. Review

The **Design** part itself consists of several activities. The designer has to take utmost care while choosing the intended contents. The contents will make the design good or bad. The designer need be a knowledgeable person with the understanding of deep rooted principles as well as the contemporary updating. Designer must think not only about the present but he should be able to foresee the future expectations.

This curriculum design is going to be the guiding force in making a student or a learner applicable to a future task. So, this design has to be relevant, appropriate and valid. There is no point in having a non-workable design at this stage.

Appropriate time must be given in designing; not so less that it can not be designed appropriately and not so much that the relevance modifies.

The **Development** part is very interesting. The design so made has to take a shape. Debates may arise due to the fact that some of the design issues may not be developed as per the expectations. Also, if some time has elapsed, then possibly some of the points may have lost there relevance. Again, more relevant and contemporary issues may arise at this point of time.

The curriculum development team has to take care of the fact weather the competent team of faculties is there to understand and deliver the intended contents. So, capacity building is also a part in the curriculum development process. The curriculum development process roughly consists of the following activities:

- a) Vision statements
- b) Goals
- c) Standards
- d) Performance benchmarks
- e) Learning activities
- f) Instructional strategies
- g) Interdisciplinary connections
- h) Other integration activities that guide curriculum implementation

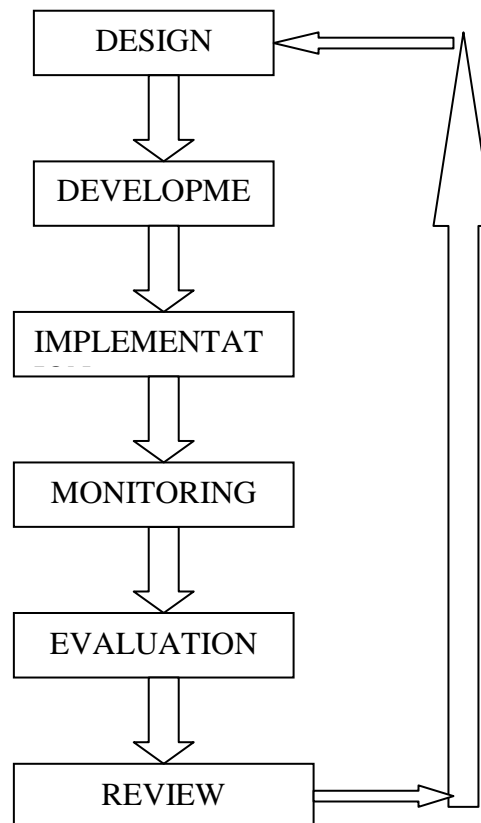
The next activity in Curriculum Development Exercise is **Implementation**. All the efforts that we have put in so far may go waste if implementation is not properly done. This is a serious activity. Implementation needs proper planning, scrutiny and execution. Here we need to chart out a plan of offering the curriculum to students. Various stakeholders need to sit together and plan for the implementation of the curriculum. First and foremost is the faculty development in this new framework. Then the capacity building that involves faculty, laboratories, books, tools, technology and other requirements. When all the things are in place the students need be told regarding the relevance of the newly developed curriculum. Enthusiasm need be created among learners as well as the teachers.

The next activity is **Monitoring**. Here we need to check on a continuous basis that we are doing what we are intended to. This is actually part of Implementation. In this phase we look for the practical problems those are arising in the effective implementation of the subjective curriculum. Also, when the process is done by many stakeholders, some best practices may outcome. These practices need be generalized. Here we also need to check whether we are consistent with the goals and objectives drawn earlier. If so, then areas of improvements can be looked for. And if not then a critical analysis need be done. Data is to be gathered for effective policy and decision making.

The next stage is **Evaluation**. Here we engage ourselves in analyzing data collected on the field to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum design and its implementation as they relate to the learner. The process entails comprehensive study of the data with the view of identifying possible deficiencies and root causes that can lead to corrective action. It is the findings from this exercise that directly influence the final stage of review.

The final stage is **Review**. The information gained from data analysis is used to guide appropriate adjustments to the curriculum documents. Such adjustments incorporate the strengths and address any apparent weakness of the implemented curriculum. Because of technological developments and the resulting ease with which new information can be shared, continuously evolving curriculum is now possible. Updates, links to resource material and successful teaching and learning experiences can be easily incorporated in curricula. These considerations are all geared towards curriculum improvement and improved student performance in meeting national, developmental and educational goals.

As stated above, the Curriculum development is a continuously evolving exercise. Above mentioned six stages are cyclic in nature. And after every cycle we come across a new curriculum that has the same old flavor of basic principles and a pinch of contemporary issues.



**Fig.1: Curriculum Development Process**

## II. THE PROBLEMS

In the process of Curriculum Development, there are several problems. The basic problem is the communication of Goals. The objectives as aspired by the design and development team may not be fully understood by the implementation authorities. The implementation part consisting of many stakeholders mainly comprises of the faculty. Some times the faculty may not be competent enough to abide by the objectives.

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They do it just for the sake of doing. And at other times, the infrastructure requirements may not have been truly observed. Lack of requisite technology may also spoil the cause. Ever great problem is the understanding of the learner. The learner at most times is interested in good grades rather than understanding the basic purpose.

In many a cases it is seen that for certain professional courses, the curriculum remains intact over the years. There happens to be no change or a slight misleading change is there for showing purpose. Latest practices have not been included in the courses and sometimes, even some new practices are included on the verge of their extinction. Also, if somehow, something contemporary is added, it takes some years to establish the same in full flow and by that time its relevance has already diminished.

As an example, a learner studying a professional course for duration of 2, 3 or 4 years understands some basic aspects. When he goes to industry or for a job, he get to know that what so ever he has learnt over the years is not up to the mark and he needs to adapt to ever new situations that he never seen while graduating.

As per the industry standards, he needs to learn new ways to cope with the current situation. On the other hand, if he had some taste regarding this at the graduating stage, he would have fared better.

As per the discussion till now, the problem lies at the stage of Curriculum Design. The Design team must have some stakeholders from the industry where the learner under contention will probably be working in the near future. Also, the stakeholders need to foresee the probable change in the industry after say three to four years, because the curriculum that we are implementing today will reap its fruit, in form of learned graduate, after that much time only. So, curriculum should not be designed on the basis of present requirements only but it should cater for the future requirements also.

The end result of the exercise is the development of skill sets in the learner. The learner need be trained according to the objectives set at the design state. This implies that there is a strong need that the learner learns with open mind. This means that the curriculum need not be adhered strictly but there has to be provision of acute flexibility. The flexibility should be in context with the changing environment and not otherwise. The curriculum itself must comprise of the rigid and the flexible parts.

As stated earlier, the implementation part consists of most of the challenges. It has been observed that different institutions offering same curriculum does so in a non-standard manner. Differences lie in approaches, teaching methodologies, laboratory manuals, practical knowledge sharing and other styles. Also, the focus is on grades rather than the learning outcomes. Another big issue is the time spent in actual classroom teaching.

Each course curriculum has a stipulated time frame for lecture delivery as well as for laboratory assignments. But, generally it is observed that either the time is too less to cover up the syllabus or sufficient number of hours is not available for classroom teaching. In both the cases the learner deviates from grasping the requisites and simply crams for the purpose of examination. This hampers the overall cause.

The evaluation and review systems are in place but in many a cases it has been observed that these systems hardly turns anything.

### III. PROPOSED SOLUTION

Some fundamental changes in the approach may provide some sort of rescue. Listed below are some points to ponder:

1. The curriculum should be of short duration (Preferably up to two years maximum).
2. It should consist of an interesting chain mechanism.
3. Capacity building activity should concurrence with the Curriculum Design state.
4. Ample consideration is to be given for faculty development.
5. Evaluation & Review methods are to be utilized when they are there.
6. Industry perspective need be considered at appropriate states.
7. Examination system need be incorporated with new dimensions.

### IV. CONCLUSION

In the process of Curriculum Development, there are several problems. The basic problem is the communication of Goals. The objectives as aspired by the design and development team may not be fully understood by the implementation authorities.

Lack of requisite technology may also spoil the cause. Ever great problem is the understanding of the learner. The learner at most times is interested in good grades rather than understanding the basic purpose. The evaluation and review systems are hardly utilized. And therefore some fundamental changes in the approach are required to establish and run a good curriculum.

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